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Station number of document : PIR-10183
Date of document : 16 Jul 51
Title of document : Alleged Bank of France Treasure
- Francesco MERCANDELLI
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SUMMARY

In March 1950, the Major of the Carabinieri Group Command of Genoa, with the authorization of the DEALER headquarters, introduced to the Rome DEALER Chief a Mr Alessandro SOTTILE who placed himself at the disposal of the SIFAR organs for retracing a treasure which allegedly was hidden in Italy by DARNAND at the end of World War II. SOTTILE stated that the secret of the hiding place is known to one Francesco MERCANDELLI, an Italian citizen detained in the Regina Coeli prison in Rome on a charge of homicide. SOTTILE received the assignment of the recovery of the treasure from Roberto REKASSA, a French lawyer and a "man of trust of the French Treasury".

According to MERCANDELLI the treasure included gold bars, money and precious stones taken from the Bank of France by DARNAND and documents of the DARNAND militia. The alleged hiding place is the laundry of a large villa overlooking Lake Como on the road from Milan to Valtellina. The treasure was buried on the 25th of April, 1945. On May 15 the Americans moved into the vicinity and occupied the house, owned by two sisters living elsewhere in the vicinity. On 5 June 1945 DARNAND was arrested at Edolo, which is in the vicinity of the house.

MERCANDELLI refused to give any further information on the location of the treasure unless he was extradited to France and given special treatment by the judicial authorities, as he does not trust the authorities. It has been explained to MERCANDELLI that as he is an Italian citizen this is impossible. However, at the time of the report he refused to cooperate on any other terms.

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